

# The Todd Nuthatch



Indiana, PA

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Todd Bird Club  
[www.toddbirdclub.org](http://www.toddbirdclub.org)

August 2017

## Meetings

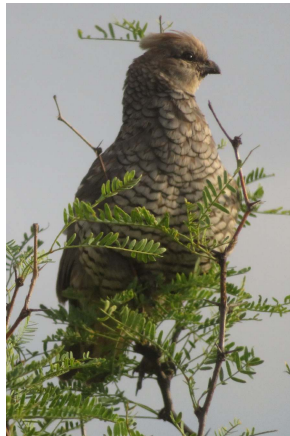
Todd Bird Club meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. the first Tuesday of the month, September through April, at Blue Spruce Lodge in Blue Spruce County Park, located just off Route 110 east of the town of Ernest. Arrive early to socialize. Refreshments are provided at each of our meetings.

In May we hold our banquet meeting which starts at 6:00 p.m.

**Tuesday, September 5** – Members Roger and Margaret Higbee will take us to Texas, including a side trip to Arizona for a Tufted Flycatcher, their only life bird this adventure. The trip begins at Big Bend National Park where highlights include Colima Warblers, Common Black Hawk, and numerous Greater Roadrunners and Scaled Quail. Just a few of their other destinations include Friedrich Wilderness Park for Golden-cheeked Warbler, Mitchell Lake for shorebirds, San Ygnacio for the White-collared Seedeater, Bentsen Rio Grande Valley State Park for the Grove-billed Ani as well as Sabal Palm Sanctuary, Santa Ana NWR, and Anahuac NWR.

**Tuesday, October 3** – Ian Gardner will take us to Honduras on the CACAO 2017 Expedition. After participating in Juniata Valley Audubon's Birding for Conservation trip to Honduras in February 2016, he organized this second trip.

Cacao is the Honduran colloquial name for the threatened Red-throated Caracara, a raptor that has nearly disap-



This Scaled Quail was found at Big Bend.

peared from Central America in the past few decades. It is also the acronym for a small but passionate cooperative of multi-national conservationists. The group traveled on a research expedition to two locations in the remote eastern portion of the country, Reserva Biologica Rus Rus in Gracias a Dios and Parque Nacional Botaderos in Olancho. Their goals were to work with local conservation pioneers and preserves to survey and promote the wide diversity of bird life in these special yet threatened regions. Come to learn more about this important research initiative and the amazing diversity of habitats and the birds they found while there.

**Tuesday, November 7** – Members Jim and Flo McGuire had an opportunity to travel to Belize with a small group of birders last February. Belize is a small English speaking Central American country with a diversity of habitats, making it home to 574 different species of birds. The McGuires' tour included a day at the Lamanai Mayan Site (also a birding hotspot!) and was led by an excellent local guide. They are looking forward to sharing some of their photos and experiences of this birding/cultural trip.

Flo is a retired software developer who has been fascinated by birds for as long as she can remember. She is active in the Seneca Rocks Audubon Society, serves on the board of PSO and is the compiler for Forest County. The McGuires enjoy helping Scott Stoleson in his bird-banding research, and going birding near and far.

# Outings

**Tuesday morning outings** will continue till deer season. *Most outings are at Yellow Creek except for Tuesday, September 26, and October 17; see below.* Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office, located on Route 259 just off Route 422 east of Indiana. Early comers are invited to meet at the pavilion on the north shore shortly after dawn. Everyone –from beginner to expert birder – is welcome. If you have any questions contact Lee Carnahan (724-388-4667) or Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493).

**Saturday, August 26** – Conneaut Harbor, Ohio, led by Roger and Margaret Higbee. We will spend a good part of the day at this shorebird mecca then bird our way home. Plans are to leave Indiana at 6:30 a.m. If you plan to attend or wish to carpool, contact the Higbees for details (724-354-3493).

**Saturday, September 2** – Blue Spruce County Park outing, led by John Taylor (724-357-4469). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the first large parking lot just past the park office. This is our annual outing for fall warblers and other migrants.

**Saturday, September 9** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Lee Carnahan (724-388-4667). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at park office.

**Saturday, September 15, 16, & 17** – Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology's (PSO) annual meeting in Carlisle, PA. For more information, go to [www.pabirds.org](http://www.pabirds.org) and click on "Annual Meeting."

**Saturday, September 23** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Tom Glover ([tomnglover@comcast.net](mailto:tomnglover@comcast.net)). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at park office.

**Tuesday, September 26** – Moraine State Park, led by Mike Shaffer. Meet under the 528 Bridge (Prospect Exit off 422 – Take 528 North towards Jennings). Join us on a birding adventure looking for warblers and waterfowl in the Muddy Creek Area of Lake Arthur. This area is known to produce some great bird sightings this time of year. We will bird till about 11:00 at several locations

throughout the Muddy Creek Cove, including the former Duck Pond Dam area, as well as the mouth of Muddy Creek. Bring your enthusiasm, water, snacks and sharp eyes and ears. There are no restroom facilities once we leave the 528 Bridge area.

**Saturday, September 30** – Ghost Town Trail, led by Roger and Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493). Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot at Dilltown, 7452 Route 403, Dilltown, PA 15929.

**Saturday & Sunday, October 7 & 8** – *Birdwatcher's Digest's* Big Sit. Create your own 17-foot-diameter circle then count all the birds you see, or find a pre-existing circle to join. Our state has led the whole world with the most circles in past years.

**Saturday, October 14** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Gloria Lamer (724-349-1159). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office.

**Tuesday, October 17** – This is our annual hawkwatch trip to the Allegheny Front. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Yellow Creek State Park office to carpool or at the hawkwatch at 9:15 a.m. For information contact Roger or Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493). Bring something to sit on, and dress warmly as it is often cold and windy on the Front. Bring your lunch.

**Saturday, October 21** – Saylor Park & the Ghost Town Trail, located south of Indiana, off US Rt. 119. Leaders are Lee Carnahan and Tom Glover. Meet at Saylor Park at 8:00 a.m.

**Saturday, October 28** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Lee Carnahan (724-388-4667). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office.

**Saturday, November 4** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Roger and Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office. This is our annual fall joint outing with the Three Rivers Birding Club. The field trip will culminate with lunch at the Chinese buffet in Indiana.

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## Yellow Creek State Park Beach Renovation

Three Todd members recently attended a meeting at Yellow Creek State Park concerning the upcoming beach renovation. Park Manager Jim Twardy explained the plan to demolish the current buildings and replace them

with a more modern changing room/restroom. In addition, the beach will be enlarged, the playground will be moved to the beach area, and a pavilion will also be constructed.

## From the President's Desk...

Do you realize that our first fall meeting will be here in a few weeks? It's scheduled for Tuesday the 5<sup>th</sup> of September. The summer season has come and gone already. I hope you managed to do some good birding over the warmer months.

One of the highlights this summer were sightings of Dickcissels. If you check eBird you will see that Dickcissels were reported by Margaret and Roger Higbee on their June 1 Breeding Bird Survey route on Laughlin Farm Road just over the county line in Westmoreland. These birds continued into July with a number of sightings with as many as eight reported at one time. On June 17 Tony Bruno found two singing Dickcissels near West Lebanon. The following day the Higbees drove to West Lebanon, relocated Tony's birds, then found two more on Olivet Road just over the county line in Armstrong. Not to be out done, I searched Sandy Ridge Road in the southeast area of Jefferson County on July 22 and found a Dickcissel. My sighting was only the third time Dickcissel had been recorded in eBird for Jefferson County.

Other events that should be mentioned involved Purple Martins. Note the report on page of 5 this issue. You never know when a circumstance will develop into a birding conversation. On the first Saturday in August my son Jud and I were selling raffle tickets at the Hazen Flea Market. After selling tickets to Eli, we started talking and learned he was from the Smicksburg area. I naturally guided the conversation to birding. We found out that he has martin houses on his farm; this year 18 pairs of martins nested in his houses.



Roger Higbee photographed this Dickcissel on his favorite perch at West Lebanon.



Phoebe practices using binoculars.

Jud and I were birding State Game Lands No. 87 in Clearfield County on Sunday, July 30. I noticed birds perched on the cell phone tower just off the road. After scoping them, I counted a mixed flock of 19 adults and recently fledged Purple Martins. These birds were continually flying from the tower and back, apparently foraging for insects.

My notes are not complete without an update on Phoebe. In September she will be 18 months old. She's walking now and beginning to verbalize. She has "No, no, no, no" down pat. Her birding knowledge is expanding at an ever accelerating rate. This past month she has learned about binoculars. While viewing photos of birders, she points out binoculars. In fact, Grandma and Grandpa gave her a pair of toy binoculars on our recent visit. Yes, she knows how to use them, but she needs to work on her technique. Hopefully the toy binoculars will save mom's and dad's from an accident.

I have to share one recent Phoebe story. Phoebe and her dad were visiting Grandma Fuller's this past July. The family was relaxing on the back porch one evening when in the distance a Barred Owl called. Before anyone could react, Phoebe pointed in the direction of the calling owl, threw back her head, and let loose with her owl imitation. As always you got love it!

Good birding,

Tom Glover

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## Special Thanks to the Cunkelmans

Sincere thanks to Dan and Marcy Cunkelman for hosting this year's Todd Bird Club picnic at their home. Of the 36 people present, 23 were Todd members or friends. The variety of food was amazing, and everything was delicious. It was a great time to socialize and tour Marcy's yard to observe birds, butterflies, moths, and plants. We truly appreciate all the work Marcy puts into hosting this event every year. Thank you!!! (See page 12 for photos.)



# The Continuing Saga of Blinky, the Eastern Screech-Owl

by Stephanie Higbee

After the owl box was hung, we waited and watched, hoping Blinky would find and like the box. After about a week, we saw a face peering from the hole. Then almost every day after that, at dawn and dusk, Blinky would peek out, and we'd watched from our kitchen window with binoculars.

With the weather becoming nice in April, we began spending more time outside, getting ready to garden while the kids played on their swings and in their playhouse.

Blinky became so accustomed to our being in the backyard, that he (we incorrectly assumed a male owl) would peek from the box, turn his head watching us as we moved around. If we were quiet, we could stand right below the box, and he would peer down at us. Such a majestic creature. Several times, at dusk, and even dawn, we witnessed Blinky leave the box to fly to a tree or to swoop down after prey.

On May 18, I saw a Jim Henson-like creature poking his head out of the box...an owlet! Scrawny neck, big eyes, and downy feathers. Over the next few days, we continued to see Blinky (which we now knew was a she), the papa owl, and what we assumed was one owlet, alternately peeking from the box.

Then, on one occasion, we were lucky to observe two owlet faces competing to look out the hole! At this point, we knew there were at least two owlets.

On the morning of May 26, we saw one owlet fledge, then another. They stayed in a tree near the owl box, Mama Blinky and Papa watching over them from a nearby branch.

My husband Rob arrived home that evening, and I rushed him into the backyard to see the owlets. As I was pointing one out in a tree, he remarked, "Wow, look at that squirrel in the playset." (Our playset has a "clubhouse" complete with window panes – no glass or screen.) We both looked over and were overjoyed to realize it was not a squirrel looking at us from the playset window, but rather a beautiful, gray, fluffy owlet. It was still in the same spot the following day.

The transformation from scrawny Muppets stretching their necks from the owl box, to fluffy, puffy little owlets, in basically a week from when we noticed them, to their fledging, was simply astonishing.

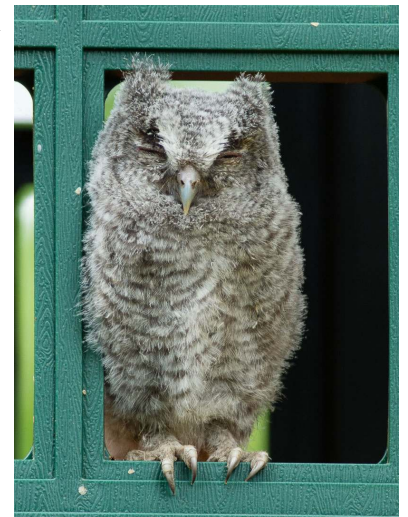
All four owls (Mama Blinky, Papa, Owlet 1 and Owlet 2) were out and about most of Friday, May 26. The adults alternated hunting for food to feed their young.



The adult, left, perches near the nest box beside one of her recently fledged young.

Photo by Rob Higbee

On Saturday, May 27, all four were in our yard again, all day. The one owlet remained in the playset window the majority of the day. We spent so much time watching, observing, photographing, and filming them. Friends visited us that weekend, so four children got to observe this event. At one point toward evening, all four owls were perched in a vertical row of branches in a pine tree. Simply amazing!



The other fledgling took up residence in the kids' playhouse.

Photo by Rob Higbee

Toward the end of that day, we saw them fly. The following day, they were gone from our yard, and we've not seen a sign of them since.

We plan to clean their nest box and hope to have another "owl-tastic" experience this fall.

# Purple Martin Box Project – Successes and Failures

This past spring Lee Carnahan completed construction of the Purple Martin nesting box for Blue Spruce County Park. He also completely refurbished the martin house that has been at Yellow Creek State Park for years. He was instrumental in moving the box from the south shore to its current position near the sail basin.

Adult martins arrive early, but first-year birds come four to six weeks later. When establishing a new colony, the goal is to attract the yearlings. Lee opened the holes in the Yellow Creek nest box around the end of May.

On June 5 Lee sighted three first-year Purple Martins near the box. By June 8 nest building was observed. A nest check on June 13 revealed three eggs. Success!!! We had a nesting pair! When the nest was checked again on June 17, a full clutch of six eggs was present.

The incubation period for Purple Martins is 15-16 days. When the box was lowered and the compartment removed



When the nest box was checked on June 17, a full clutch of six eggs was present.

Photo by Lee Carnahan



The female Purple Martin was incubating the eggs when the box was opened.

Photo by Lee Carnahan

on July 8, it was determined that the eggs were six days overdue. The female continued to sit, but by July 13, she had abandoned the nest box.

We don't really know what happened, but they were young, inexperienced birds. Possibly the eggs were not fertile or she remained off the nest too long. Had the eggs hatched, the Purple Martins in all likelihood would return next year. It's still possible that they will. Another good sign was that Lee spotted five martins around the nest box on July 8 – all young birds from the previous year. We are hoping to establish a colony at Yellow Creek.

The new Blue Spruce nest box did not attract martins this year. Two holes were left open, and Eastern Bluebirds fledged young from the box. A European Starling also took up residence in the box. The nest box's location is good. Next year could be our year for success at both parks. We're hoping!

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## Pennsylvania Migration Count

This year's PAMC (formerly North American Migration Count) was held Saturday, May 13. This count has taken place in Pennsylvania on the second Saturday of May since 1992.

Special thanks to Marge Van Tassel for compiling Armstrong's count. Count compilation has been more difficult with the elimination of county compilers for the PAMC. In the past, birders had assigned areas, so the chances were minimal that birds were being counted

more than once. The idea this year was for everyone to just enter his or her data into eBird. That's fine for getting as much electronic data recorded as possible, but it left little control over the areas participants birded. Multiple birders covered Yellow Creek, so it was difficult to determine whether various parties were tallying the same birds.

The compilations for both counties follow on pages 6-7.

# Indiana Pennsylvania Migration Count 2017

Canada Goose	176	Willow Flycatcher	4	Blue-winged Warbler	10
Mute Swan	3	Least Flycatcher	11	Black-and-white Warbler	16
Wood Duck	54	Eastern Phoebe	85	Tennessee Warbler	4
Mallard	18	Great Crested Flycatcher	3	Nashville Warbler	14
Bufflehead	1	Eastern Kingbird	19	Kentucky Warbler	2
Common Merganser	6	White-eyed Vireo	6	Common Yellowthroat	198
Ring-necked Pheasant	1	Yellow-throated Vireo	15	Hooded Warbler	106
Ruffed Grouse	2	Blue-headed Vireo	31	American Redstart	62
Wild Turkey	22	Philadelphia Vireo	1	Cape May Warbler	7
Horned Grebe	1	Warbling Vireo	4	Cerulean Warbler	6
Rock Pigeon	60	Red-eyed Vireo	168	Northern Parula	9
Mourning Dove	251	Blue Jay	184	Magnolia Warbler	31
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	10	American Crow	282	Bay-breasted Warbler	9
Black-billed Cuckoo	15	Fish Crow	3	Blackburnian Warbler	15
Chimney Swift	141	Common Raven	8	Yellow Warbler	141
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	36	Horned Lark	14	Chestnut-sided Warbler	53
Killdeer	53	Purple Martin	15	Blackpoll Warbler	1
Spotted Sandpiper	10	Tree Swallow	295	Black-throated Blue Warbler	5
Solitary Sandpiper	2	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	100	Palm Warbler	1
Least Sandpiper	1	Bank Swallow	1	Pine Warbler	5
American Woodcock	10	Cliff Swallow	6	Yellow-rumped Warbler	39
Black Tern	1	Barn Swallow	364	Yellow-throated Warbler	2
Forster's Tern	24	Carolina Chickadee	2	Prairie Warbler	5
Common Loon	3	Black-capped Chickadee	135	Black-throated Green Warbler	88
Double-crested Cormorant	5	Tufted Titmouse	121	Canada Warbler	1
Great Blue Heron	21	Red-breasted Nuthatch	7	Wilson's Warbler	1
Green Heron	7	White-breasted Nuthatch	74	Yellow-breasted Chat	2
Turkey Vulture	100	Brown Creeper	2	Eastern Towhee	277
Osprey	1	House Wren	40	Chipping Sparrow	170
Bald Eagle	3	Carolina Wren	47	Field Sparrow	34
Northern Harrier	2	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	40	Vesper Sparrow	1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	Golden-crowned Kinglet	1	Savannah Sparrow	1
Cooper's Hawk	3	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	Song Sparrow	278
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	Eastern Bluebird	77	Swamp Sparrow	7
Broad-winged Hawk	4	Swainson's Thrush	4	White-throated Sparrow	5
Red-tailed Hawk	28	Hermit Thrush	9	White-crowned Sparrow	20
Eastern Screech-Owl	1	Wood Thrush	291	Dark-eyed Junco	4
Great Horned Owl	2	American Robin	887	Scarlet Tanager	98
Barred Owl	4	Gray Catbird	227	Northern Cardinal	283
Belted Kingfisher	6	Northern Mockingbird	23	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	96
Red-headed Woodpecker	1	Brown Thrasher	37	Indigo Bunting	55
Red-bellied Woodpecker	89	European Starling	345	Bobolink	39
Downy Woodpecker	60	House Sparrow	260	Red-winged Blackbird	556
Hairy Woodpecker	29	House Finch	106	Eastern Meadowlark	25
Northern Flicker	41	Purple Finch	21	Common Grackle	381
Pileated Woodpecker	33	Pine Siskin	1	Brown-headed Cowbird	88
American Kestrel	11	American Goldfinch	232	Orchard Oriole	11
Eastern Wood-Pewee	1	Ovenbird	285	Baltimore Oriole	150
Acadian Flycatcher	1	Northern Waterthrush	1		

Total Number of Species = 147  
 Total Number of Individuals = 9,665

Total Observers = 61

On the next page are listed the observers. Names without asterisks birded in Indiana. Those with one asterisk are the Armstrong observers; those with two asterisks submitted data for both Indiana and Armstrong. Thanks to all who participated!



# Armstrong Pennsylvania Migration Count 2017

Canada Goose	45	Eastern Kingbird	1	Nashville Warbler	1
Wood Duck	21	White-eyed Vireo	1	Common Yellowthroat	33
Mallard	17	Yellow-throated Vireo	3	Hooded Warbler	17
Common Merganser	3	Warbling Vireo	4	American Redstart	16
Ruddy Duck	1	Red-eyed Vireo	45	Cerulean Warbler	1
Wild Turkey	1	Blue Jay	16	Northern Parula	2
Rock Pigeon	4	American Crow	13	Magnolia Warbler	1
Mourning Dove	30	Common Raven	4	Blackburnian Warbler	3
Chimney Swift	40	Purple Martin	19	Yellow Warbler	18
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	3	Tree Swallow	14	Chestnut-sided Warbler	5
Killdeer	8	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	17	Black-throated Blue Warbler	1
American Woodcock	2	Barn Swallow	32	Yellow-rumped Warbler	8
Spotted Sandpiper	4	Black-capped Chickadee	15	Yellow-throated Warbler	1
Solitary Sandpiper	1	Tufted Titmouse	18	Black-throated Green Warbler	7
Lesser Yellowlegs	1	White-breasted Nuthatch	6	Eastern Towhee	29
Common Loon	7	Carolina Wren	18	Chipping Sparrow	23
Double-crested Cormorant	25	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	9	Field Sparrow	6
Great Blue Heron	4	Eastern Bluebird	23	Savannah Sparrow	3
Green Heron	1	Veery	1	Song Sparrow	25
Turkey Vulture	3	Wood Thrush	31	Swamp Sparrow	1
Bald Eagle	4	Swainson's Thrush	3	White-crowned Sparrow	6
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	American Robin	60	Scarlet Tanager	18
Broad-winged Hawk	1	Gray Catbird	43	Northern Cardinal	40
Red-tailed Hawk	4	Brown Thrasher	5	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	8
Belted Kingfisher	2	Northern Mockingbird	6	Indigo Bunting	9
Red-bellied Woodpecker	9	European Starling	26	Bobolink	11
Downy Woodpecker	4	House Sparrow	22	Red-winged Blackbird	90
Hairy Woodpecker	2	House Finch	4	Eastern Meadowlark	16
Northern Flicker	3	Purple Finch	4	Common Grackle	25
Pileated Woodpecker	5	American Goldfinch	38	Brown-headed Cowbird	3
American Kestrel	4	Ovenbird	8	Orchard Oriole	5
Eastern Wood-Pewee	1	Louisiana Waterthrush	1	Baltimore Oriole	13
Eastern Phoebe	12	Blue-winged Warbler	2		
Great Crested Flycatcher	5	Black-and-white Warbler	7		

Total Number of Species = 100  
Total Number of Individuals = 1,242

## PA Migration Count Participants

Pat Andrascik	Ed Donley	**Roger Higbee	Beth Marshall	Linda Stormer
Steve Andrascik	*Erma Dovenspike	*Bob Jackman	Ken Marshall	Rodger Stormer
Sharon Baldridge	Bob Fairman	Anna Jennings	Bruce Mehus	Garrett Strittmatter
Jean Blair	Emmy Fairman	Pat Johner	Helen Mehus	Mark Strittmatter
Sid Blair	Gary Ferrence	Connie Johnston	Marilyn Moore	John Taylor
Vernon Blystone	Jeanine Ferrence	Debbie Kalbfleisch	Nancy Murphy	Mary Lu Tucker
Lee Carnahan	Betsy Fetterman	Gloria Lamer	Sandra Newell	**Marge Van Tassel
Dorcas Clark	Tom Fetterman	Jeff Larkin	Sara Pulliam	Jason Verdier
Chuck Condron	Barb Fletcher	Dennis Lauffer	James Pumford	Diane Walkowski
Joanne Condron	Tom Glover	*Suzann Wagner Leipertz	Joseph Pumford	Daniel Winstead
Dan Cunkelman	Steve Gosser	Rita Lippert	Bob Ramsey	Ray Winstead
Marcy Cunkelman	Carol Guba	Mary A. Little	*Theo Rickert	Jan Woodard
Sue Dickson	Alicia Hall	Lori Maggio	Cindy Rogers	Jim Woodard
*Anna Donato	**Margaret Higbee	Howard Mandigo	Nancy Smeltzer	

# Indiana - Armstrong - Cambria County – Spring 2017

If you notice that the species in the following report are in a different order, check out the new American Birding Association's checklist at [http://listing.aba.org/checklist/abachecklist\\_v7.9.0.pdf](http://listing.aba.org/checklist/abachecklist_v7.9.0.pdf). There has been a major reshuffling of species.

Please send your bird reports at the end of each month to Margaret Higbee at [bcoriole@windstream.net](mailto:bcoriole@windstream.net) or mail to 3119 Creekside Road, Indiana, PA 15701.

**Abbreviations:** Armstrong Trail north of Lock & Dam 8 (AT), Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), Christmas Bird Count (CBC), Crooked Creek (CC), Indiana (IN), Keystone Reservoir (KR), Lewisville (LV), Lock & Dam (L & D), Pennsylvania Migration Count (PAMC), Prince Gallitzin State Park (PG), Shelocta (SH), Winter Raptor Survey (WRS), Yellow Creek State Park (YC).

After seven or more years of low waterfowl numbers, this year set a few records. Two hundred **Tundra Swans** were noted at YC 3/6 (RLo); 120 visited Colver Reservoir 3/13 (LG); 306 was PG's high on 3/20 (LG). Near North Point 5/13 (MM, NS) 2 hen **Wood Ducks** were noted with broods, one with 15 ducklings, the other with 8; these sightings accounted for half the Wood Ducks on the PAMC. On 5/17 (ED) 6 Wood Ducks fledged from the Donley pond near SH. One **Gadwall** stopped by a pond near Marion Center 3/16 (SN); PG harbored 20 on 3/20 (JSa), and they were still present three days later (JSa). A high tally of 78 Gadwalls at YC 3/21 (LC, RC, ME, PF, MH, RH, DK, RN, LS) is the second highest spring count on record; the previous high of 90 occurred 3/13/1990 (SK). YC yielded 107 **American Wigeons** on 3/18 (LC, TG, MH, RH, DK, GL), the highest count on record since 2008. Nineteen was PG's high wigeon tally 3/23 (JSa) while *Armstrong's* best was a flock of 5 at Logansport 3/18 (JB). YC's **Northern Pintails** peaked on 3/11 (TB, LC, TG, MH, RH, JP) at 81, also the highest count on record since 2008. PG hosted 22 pintails 3/23 (JSa) while 2 stopped at CC 3/5 (MH, RH), *Armstrong's* lone report. March 3 (MH, RH) marked the earliest appearance on record of a drake **Blue-winged Teal** at YC; 4 appeared at CC 4/6 (MD), the only report away from YC.

YC also produced the top tally of 71 **Canvasbacks** 3/18 (LC, TG, MH, RH, DK, GL), the same day (TA) 4 were noted at PG; 6 visited CC 3/10 (JB). Five **Redheads** were photographed at CC 3/10 (JB); a flock of 193 Redheads was present at YC 3/21 (LC, RC, ME, PF, MH, RH, RN, LS); this number was last surpassed in 2008. PG's high of 45 occurred 3/23 (JSa). Though nowhere near the top 715 count in 2001 (SK), **Ring-necked Ducks** peaked at 374 at YC 3/21 (LC, RC, ME, PF, MH, RH, RN, LS); this is, however, the best count since 2011. PG's high of 83 occurred 3/18 (TA); along the AT, 17 were tallied 3/12



Joseph Pumford photographed these two drake Blue-winged Teal at Yellow Creek 4/11.

(TR). Near Marion Center, the Newell pond hosted a pair 3/21-24 (SN). **Greater Scaup** appeared in larger numbers this year with highs of 85 at PG 3/23 (JS), 19 at CC 3/10 (JB), and 16 at YC 3/25 (TG). The 421 **Lesser Scaup** tallied on 3/11 (TB, LC, TG, MH, RH, JP) at YC comprised the fourth highest number on record; 70 were counted at PG 3/20 (JSa); 10 was *Armstrong's* high 3/29 (MH, RH) along the AT n. of L&D 8. Four **Long-tailed Ducks** were listed at YC on 3/21 (LC, RC, ME, PF, MH, RH, RN, LS), the region's high tally. Two appeared along the Allegheny at Kittanning 3/31 (JB) while PG hosted singletons on five dates bracketed by 3/22 (TA) and 4/16 (RL); photographs on eBird show that multiple Long-tails were involved. A lone drake was at Logansport 4/7 (JB). **Buffleheads** peaked at 56 on 3/20 (JSa) at PG, 5 on 3/29 (AK, JK) at CC, and 72 on 4/12 (LD) at YC. Only 2 **Common Goldeneyes** were spotted at YC this season 3/7 (LC, TG, MH, RH, GL) and 3/9 (MVT); on 3/10 (JB) 4 arrived at CC.

Two **Hooded Mergansers** visited the Newell pond 3/18-23 (SN); 18 at PG 3/20 (JSa) had increased to 40 by 3/23 (JSa); 17 was YC's best count 3/21 (LC, RC, ME, PF, DK, RN, LS); 2 hens showed up at the Donley pond 4/20 (ED), checked out the nest boxes, then departed. **Common Mergansers** were widespread in both *Indiana* and *Armstrong*. Previously occurring in much larger flocks, it was good to see reports of 84 **Red-breasted Mergansers** at PG 3/20 (LG) and 145 at YC on 3/25 (TG), the best YC tally since 2014. Top **Ruddy Duck** counts were 104 at YC 4/1 (TG), 10 at CC 3/10 (JB), and 6 at PG 3/18 (TA).

**Ruffed Grouse** continue in very low numbers; grouse were listed only at YC 4/5-23 (v.o.), at Nolo 4/15 (AB, DB), at Camerons Bottom 5/1 (CL), and on the PAMC; the PAMC with 61 observers produced only 3 individuals – a singleton near YC (PA, SA) and 2 east of Nolo (JL). In *Cambria*, SGL 108 yielded one on 5/13 (TA) and PG, 2 on



5/27 (TA). None were reported in *Armstrong*.

Small flocks of **Pied-billed Grebes** were the norm this spring with high tallies of 14 at YC 3/25 (SR) and 8 at PG 3/22 (TA). Thirty **Horned Grebes** at YC 3/24 (TR) was the highest count since 2013; 5 were photographed along the Kiski near Leechburg 4/20 (MVT).

Early **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** and **Black-billed Cuckoo** respectively appeared near LV 5/1 (MC) and near IN 4/30 (SD); the previous early dates for *Indiana* had been 5/7/2002 (PJ) for Yellow-billed and 5/2/1991 (GL, GSy) for Black-billed Cuckoo.

Single **Common Nighthawks** were found twice this season – 5/23 (CB, LC, PF, MH, RH, DK, GL, JT) when one was roosting on a branch at YC and 5/29 (MC) when one flew over a yard near LV. An **Eastern Whip-poor-will** near Adrian 5/25 (anonymous) was the region's sole report.

An extremely early **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** appeared at Nolo 4/15 (GL), beating the previous early date of 4/22/2016 (SD) by seven days. The observer had placed a few cut daffodils on her kitchen windowsill when the hummingbird appeared at the window and seemed to be going from flower to flower behind the glass; meanwhile, there were many daffodils growing outside in the yard.

A **Sora** at PG 5/7 (RL) was the lone report. **American Coot** maxima included 121 at YC 3/25 (TG) and 20 at PG 3/26 (RL).

Six **Sandhill Cranes** were observed near Frugality 4/8 (CK, FK).

The high amount of precipitation (15.91") raised lake levels and reduced the extent of the mudflats at YC. We saw few shorebirds. Two **Semipalmated Plovers** were sighted 5/23 (CB, LC et al) at YC. A **Ruddy Turnstone** 5/12 (GL) at YC was the first one found since 5/8/2013 (MH, RH). Two Lick Reservoir hosted a **Least Sandpiper** 5/13 (PJ). **Wilson's Snipe** put in two appearances at YC this spring – one on 4/9 (KR) and 2 on 4/18 (LC, RC, PF, TG, MH, RH, DK, GL). The first 2 **Spotted Sandpipers** were listed at HL 4/22 (AK, JK) while the first **Solitary Sandpipers** were seen 5/7 (MVT) at Parks Bend Farm, 5/10 (JB) at CC, and 5/13 both at IUP (JT) and at Margus Lake (BF, TF). First **Greater Yellowlegs** arrived at CC 4/14 (JB); 3 were noted at YC on both 4/25 (LC, RC, PF, TG, MH, RH, DK, GL) and 5/6 (LC, TG, GL, DR, JT), the same day (LC, TG, GL, JT) YC's only **Lesser Yellowlegs** was found. On 5/16 (MC) a Greater Yellowlegs flew over a yard near LV calling at dusk. A Lesser Yellowlegs was also noted near

Worthington 5/13 (MVT).

The only other productive location for shorebirds was a flooded field in *Cambria* along Evergreen Road which yielded one Semipalmated Plover, 2 Least Sandpipers, one Semipalmated Sandpiper, one Spotted Sandpiper, and one Solitary Sandpiper, all 5/18 (MD).

Six **Bonaparte's Gulls** at YC on 3/7 (LC, TG, MH, RH, GL) tied the previous early date set in 2000; 3 arrived 3/23 (JSa) at PG where the high of 18 occurred 4/15 (TA); a total of 150 on 4/14 (LD) at YC was the top tally. The high counts for **Ring-billed Gulls** were 41 at PG on 3/18 (TA, 39 at YC 3/21 (RC, ME, PF, MH, RH, DK, RN, LS), and 26 at CC 3/16 (MVT). A single **Herring Gull** at YC, not reported every spring, was present between 3/18-21 (m.ob.); 2 were found at YC 4/8 (MH, RH); singletons were noted 5/7 (MCh, BP, MS, ZS) at Murphy's Bottom and 5/16 (TR) along Lower Cowanshannock Creek. Thirteen **Caspian Terns** at YC 4/22 (LC, SD, TG, MH, RH, DK, JS, KT, RW) was the fourth largest flock on record. Accompanied respectively by 11 and 24 **Forster's Terns**, single **Black Terns** were observed at YC 5/12 (GL) and 5/13 (DK, GL). Thirty Forster's Terns in IN 4/13 (JP) is the sixth highest count in *Indiana*; *Armstrong* reports include 3 at CC 4/12 (MVT) and 4 at KR 4/26 (MH, RH); PG hosted 2 on 4/15 (TA) and 3 on 4/29 (DG, GG).

Top **Common Loon** reports mentioned 18 at PG 5/4 (JSa), 7 at KR 5/13 (MH, RH), and 4 at YC on both 3/25 (TG) and on 4/11 (LC, PF, TG, MH, RH, DK).

The total of 83 **Double-crested Cormorants** 4/22 (LC, SD, TG, MH, RH, DK, JS, KT, RW) at YC included 58 flyovers as well as the 25 swimming on the lake; this is one of the top ten cormorant counts at YC; 16 were sighted at CC 5/12 (MVT); PG harbored 15 on 4/29 (DG, GG).



Marge Van Tassel photographed this adult Black-crowned Night-Heron at Crooked Creek 5/10.

The Crooked Creek heronry near the *Indiana-Armstrong* line was active once again this year; 11 nests were counted on 4/26 (MH, RH), but only 9 were obviously occupied with 11 Great Blue Herons present. On 5/13 (MH, RH) 3 juveniles and 10 adults were apparent, but visibility had been greatly reduced by leafout. A **Great Egret** appeared at Rosston 3/31 (JB), and one amazingly flew over a yard near SH 4/19 (MH, RH). A adult **Black-crowned Night-Heron** was a nice find at CC 5/10 (JB, KK, MVT).

**Ospreys**, showing a trend of earlier arrival dates since 2015, appeared at YC 3/24 (MHu), the third earliest *Indiana* date on record; PG's first appeared 3/26 (RL) while *Armstrong's* arrival occurred 4/8 (DH) along Buffalo Creek. A **Northern Harrier** visited Timber Lake 3/6, 27 (AB, DB); the PAMC yielded two harrier sightings, one on

the Ferrence Farm (GF, JF) and one near Penn Run (BF, TF). SGL 107 yielded one as late as 5/27 (TA). Unusual was the flyover of two immature harriers interacting in flight on a three-minute BBS stop near SH 5/29 (MH, RH). Two **Broad-winged Hawks** arrived at IUP 4/6 (JT), the earliest date ever noted in *Indiana*; at BS 2 on 4/10 (CF) appeared on the second earliest date on record; the previous *Indiana* record had been 4/7/2005 (MH) near SH. First *Armstrong* Broad-wing was found near Center Valley 4/16 (JB). A rather late **Rough-legged Hawk** was sighted at PG 3/22 (TA).



Tina Alianiello captured this image of a very regal appearing Broad-winged Hawk at YC 4/21.

A red morph **Eastern Screech-Owl** was found peering from a cavity near CC 4/2 (MVT); another was listed near Kelly Station 4/26 (JB); the PAMC yielded one at Homer City 5/13 (SP); a pair fledged two young from a recently installed backyard owl box on 5/26 (EH, PH, RoH, SH). **Great Horned Owls** were noted at 8 locations in the region (v.o.). **Barred Owls** were listed at Nolo 3/9 (AB), 3/27 (DB), 5/3 (AB, DB) when one was calling at 5:00 p.m. Two were reported near Center Valley 4/1 (JB) and at PG 4/10 (JD, SDo); another was heard near Leechburg 4/13 (MVT). The PAMC yielded 3 e. of Nolo (JL), and one at BS (JT, RW). Two **Short-eared Owls** still lingered near Dayton 4/2 (MVT).



Marge Van Tassel found this red morph Eastern Screech Owl in *Armstrong* 4/2.

A **Red-headed Woodpecker** continued at CC through 3/29 (AK, JK); another graced the YC feeder 5/3 (JT) through at least 5/9 (LC, TG, DK, GL, JT); one visited a yard in *Armstrong* Twp. 5/13 (BM, HM).

Single **Merlins** were nice finds at Mahoning 3/14 (AD), along the Roaring Run Trail 4/10 (MH, RH), s.w. of CC 4/13 (MVT), and at YC 4/25 (LC, RC, PF, TG, MH, RH, DK, GL, ML). A **Peregrine** flew over a yard near LV 4/15 (MC); the Manorville pair were sighted 4/25 (MH, RH).

May 13 marked the return of 3 **Eastern Wood-Pewees** to parts of *Indiana* (v.o.) and one to the AT n. of L&D 8 (TR).

Single **Philadelphia Vireos** at Blacklick Valley Natural Area 5/13 (ED, GS, MS, JT) and at PG 5/14 (RL) were the only ones reported this spring.

**Fish Crows** continue to be regularly found in IN (v.o.) and now are showing up at PG with four reports of one to 2 birds bracketed by 4/10 (JD, SDo) and 5/14 (JaP).

A total of 31 **Purple Martins** was a good count at a colony midway between Smicksburg and Marion Center 4/20 (AK, JK); 15 near North Point (MM, NS) and 17 at Wood's Pond (MH, RH) were the only ones noted on the PAMC; by 5/25 (RL) 8 were present at the PG colony. Three were also present near Robbs Fording 5/29 (MH, RH). Few **Bank Swallow** reports were received, and most involved single birds – 5/6 (LC, TG, GL, DR, JT) at YC, 5/11 (JT) at IUP, and 5/27 (LC, TG, MH, RH, JT) at YC. Two were noted along the Redbank Creek going into holes in the bank near New Bethlehem 5/25 (MVT), the same day 3 were photographed at PG (RL). **Cliff Swallows**, too, were in very low numbers with singletons near Wood's Pond 4/29 (JB) and at IUP 5/4 (JT); 5 at YC 5/6 (DR); one at Hemlock Lake 5/13 (MH, RH); and 2 at SGL 108 on 5/13 (TA).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch** reports included single birds at Nolo 3/3 (CL, GL) through 4/5 (CL, GL), 1-2 near SH 3/2 - 5/13 (MH, RH), and 7 on the *Indiana* PAMC (v.o.). Single **Winter Wrens** were listed at CC 3/8 (JB) and 4/24 (MVT); at SGL 108 on 3/20 (LG); at YC 4/3 (DJM) and 4/8 (DJM, KR). Another was found e. of Nolo on 5/13 (JL).

First **Veeries** arrived 5/13, both at SGL 247 (TR) and at SGL 108 (TA). A **Gray-cheeked Thrush** at YC 5/13 (JaP, JP) was the lone report in the region. May 13 (v.o.) was the arrival date for **Swainson's Thrushes** moving through our region; late migrants were found 5/28 (MVT) on Creek Road and 5/29 (MH, RH) on the SH BBS.

Four reports of single **Pine Siskins** – all one-day wonders – were received. One was near YC 4/12 (LD); another, at Nolo 4/13 (AB, DB, GL); the third was a feeder visitor 5/13 (MH) near SH, and the last was found near LV 5/31 (MC).

Thirty-one warbler species were found in the region this spring including a **Worm-eating Warbler** at PG 5/7 (RL); this was the only one found in the region. **Louisiana Waterthrush** reports were widespread around the CC basin (v.o.) and near the Conemaugh River (v.o.); none, however, were noted in *Cambria*. First **Northern Waterthrush** showed up 5/1 (MH, RH) at YC; unusual were two late migrants 5/29 (MH, RH) ten miles apart along the SH BBS route. A **Golden-winged Warbler** at Blacklick Valley Natural Area 5/13 (ED, JT) was the only one reported in the region. First



Crooked Creek's Red-headed Woodpecker was photographed by Roger Higbee 3/5.



**Blue-winged Warblers** were found 4/26 (MH, RH) near KR and 4/29 (JB) at Robbs Fording while **Black-and-white Warblers** first appeared east of Kelly Station 4/15 (JB) and at Cochrans Mill 4/18 (MD). **Tennessee Warblers** migrated through our area in the very narrow window between 5/7 (MCh, BP, MS, ZS) and 5/23 (DK). Most of the **Nashville Warbler** sightings occurred 5/13 (v.o.), but the outlying dates were 4/30 (MC) near LV and 5/24 (MVT) at Polka Hollow. In reduced numbers for almost a decade, **Kentucky Warblers** were listed at only four locations this spring: n. of New Florence on 5/13 (ED, GS, MS, JT), near LV 5/22 (MC), at YC 5/23 (MH, RH, DK), and at BS 5/24 (MH, RH). Many species arrived early, including **American Redstart** which was first seen at BS 4/27 (MH, RH), the second earliest *Indiana* date on record with the first being 4/25/1992 (GCo, BF, GL, GSy). One to 2 **Cape May Warblers** visited a yard in IN between 5/8-15 (JP); all other Cape May reports were dated 5/13 (v.o.). **Northern Parula**, too, appeared early on 4/23 (RHa) at Conemaugh Dam; this was the third earliest date with the first near Clarksburg on 4/15/2002 (MAD). **Bay-breasted Warblers** moved quickly through our region with all reports between 5/4 (JP) and 5/20 (PR). YC hosted the first **Blackpoll Warbler** 5/13 (DW); last was noted on the Margaret BBS 5/31 (MH, RH).

**Palm Warbler** at YC 4/5 (DJM), **Prairie Warbler** near YC 4/11 (GCa, CS), and **Black-throated Green Warbler** at YC 4/10 (LD) set all-time early dates; previous respective early sightings occurred at YC 4/11/1987 (TBC, WBC), at YC 4/13/1992 (MH, GL), and on Reservoir Hill in IN 4/15/2006 (PJ). BS was the hotspot for one **Canada Warbler** which was present 5/13 (JT) through 5/24 (MH, RH); no others were reported this spring. A **Wilson's Warbler** near IN 5/13 (SD) was the lone report. No longer considered a warbler, a **Yellow-breasted Chat**, listed 5/13 (ED, GS, MS, JT) at a location about 4 miles east of Pine Ridge County Park, was the only one noted.

A **Vesper Sparrow** near Plumville 5/13 (MM) was the lone report for this species which has been disappearing from our region. Four *Indiana*, four *Armstrong*, and one *Cambria* sighting of **Savannah Sparrows** were reported. **Grasshopper Sparrows** were noted only on the Parkwood BBS 5/30 (MH, RH) and the Margaret BBS the next day (MH, RH).

An **Indigo Bunting** on 4/11 (GC, CS) near YC was also extremely early, beating the previous early date of 4/20/1992 (MC) by 9 days.

**Rusty Blackbirds** moved through Indiana between 3/7 (LC, TG, MH, RH, GL) and 4/25 (LC, RC et al) with the top tally of 30 at YC 4/5 (DJM); 3 were photographed at Logansport 3/11 (JB).



Tony Bruno photographed this Canada Warbler along the Rexis Branch of the Ghost Town Trail 5/6.

**Observers:** Tina Alianiello, Pat Andrascik, Steve Andrasick, Alice Beatty, Dave Beatty, Chris Bence, Sid Blair, John Boback, Tony Bruno, Gabby Cammarata, Lee Carnahan, Macie Chess, Richard Chirichiello, Greg Cook (GCo), Marcy Cunkelman, Michael David, Sue Dickson, Josh Donaldson, Susan Donaldson (SDo), Anna Donato, Ed Donley, Mary Ann Dunmire (MAD), Lindsey Duval, Mary Eyman, Gary Ferrence, Janine Ferrence, Betsy Fetterman, Tom Fetterman, Patience Fisher, Cameron Fiss, Tom Glover, Steve Gosser, Linda Greble, Deb Grove, Greg Grove, Ella Higbee, Margaret Higbee, Penny Higbee, Rob Higbee, Roger Higbee, Stephanie Higbee, Darren Hood, Mary Huey (MHu), Cindy Kovaloski, Frank Kovaloski, Pat Johner, Debbie Kalbfleisch, Avis Keener, John Keener, Scott Kinzey, Karlee Kocon, Clayton Lamer, Gloria Lamer, Jeff Larkin, Melissa Little, Rich Love (RLo), Renee Lubert, Gregory McDermott, DJ McNeil (DJM), Bruce Mehus, Helen Mehus, Marilyn Moore, Brady Porter, Sara Pulliam, James Pumford (JaP), Joseph Pumford, Bob Ramsey, Theo Rickert, Karli Rogers, Penny Rose, David Rymal, John Salvetti, (JSa), Kyle Selcer, Nancy Smeltzer, Cara Snell, Liz Spence, Zach Steffensmeier, Rodger Stormer, Jim Stratton, Garrett Strittmatter, Mark Strittmatter, Georgette Syster (GSy), John Taylor, Ken Truitt, Marge Van Tassel (MVT), Ken Truitt, Jim Tweardy (JTw), Daniel Winstead, Ray Winstead.





This newsletter is produced four times a year by the Todd Bird Club.

President - Tom Glover	814-938-5618	<a href="mailto:tomnglover@comcast.net">tomnglover@comcast.net</a>
Vice President - Linda Jones	724-463-0651	<a href="mailto:joneslinda@hotmail.com">joneslinda@hotmail.com</a>
Secretary - Roger Higbee	724-354-3493	<a href="mailto:rvhigbee@windstream.net">rvhigbee@windstream.net</a>
Treasurer - Gloria Lamer	724-349-1159	<a href="mailto:wimp88@gmail.com">wimp88@gmail.com</a>
Publicity - Beth Nestor		<a href="mailto:bethnestor@comcast.net">bethnestor@comcast.net</a>
Facebook - Beth Nestor		<a href="mailto:bethnestor@comcast.net">bethnestor@comcast.net</a>
Scrapbook - Donna Meyer	724-349-2787	<a href="mailto:donna.meyer36@gmail.com">donna.meyer36@gmail.com</a>
Webmaster - Ed Donley		<a href="mailto:hedonley@iup.edu">hedonley@iup.edu</a>
Newsletter - Margaret Higbee	724-354-3493	<a href="mailto:bcoriole@windstream.net">bcoriole@windstream.net</a>
Outings - Lee Carnahan	724-388-4667	



Marcy Cunkelman points out a bird to the group at the Todd picnic.



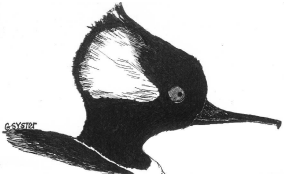
Ed Donley and the Pumford boys listen to Marcy's explanation.



This is another shot of part of the tour group at our annual picnic on August 20.



The picnic was a lot of fun, food, and fellowship, and we all enjoyed the kids.



*Todd Bird Club*  
c/o Roger V. Higbee  
3119 Creekside Road  
Indiana, PA 15701-7934